

September 29, 2017

The Honorable Edwin M. Lee  
Mayor  
City and County of San Francisco

Dear Mayor Lee,

On behalf of the citizens of Osaka, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your continued support towards the sister city exchanges between our cities. It is unfortunate that you will not be able to come, but I look forward to giving a heartfelt welcome to the San Francisco delegation visiting Osaka in October.

According to the news sources from San Francisco, I learned that the unveiling ceremony for the Comfort Women Memorial and plaque took place on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Furthermore, I was made aware that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution on September 19<sup>th</sup> to declare the day of the unveiling as "Comfort Women Day."

Referring back to previously sent letters dated February 1<sup>st</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017, allow me to reiterate that there is disagreement among historians regarding historical facts such as the number of "comfort women," the degree to which the former Japanese Army was involved, and the extent of the wartime harm. I am gravely concerned that by regarding uncertain and one-sided claims as historical facts and inscribing them onto the plaque would not be squarely facing the past, but rather a criticism of Japan.

Although the Comfort Women Memorial and plaque is currently established on private property, I have been informed that there are plans for it to become a public property. This should be a historic year to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our sister city affiliation. I am deeply worried that an action of this kind will not only lead to a disruption in the communities of your city, but it could also negatively affect the sister city exchanges as well.

For the steadfast sister city relations that have prospered over many years, I earnestly wish that it will continue even further. However, if the Comfort Women Memorial and plaque were to be located upon public property as an expression of the will of the City and County of San Francisco, not only would it be extremely regrettable, but the City of Osaka must then rethink the sister city relationship.

In August of last year, I was able to meet with you in person, and with the foundation of the friendship we have created, I can honestly convey to you about these concerns that I bear. Hoping for our cities' bright future, I once again strongly urge you to treat this issue with careful consideration in order to prevent the Comfort Women Memorial and plaque from being situated on public property.

Just as my previous letter, please accept this in the form of an open letter to widely reach the citizens of both cities so that they can understand my views.

Sincerely,

Hirofumi Yoshimura  
Mayor